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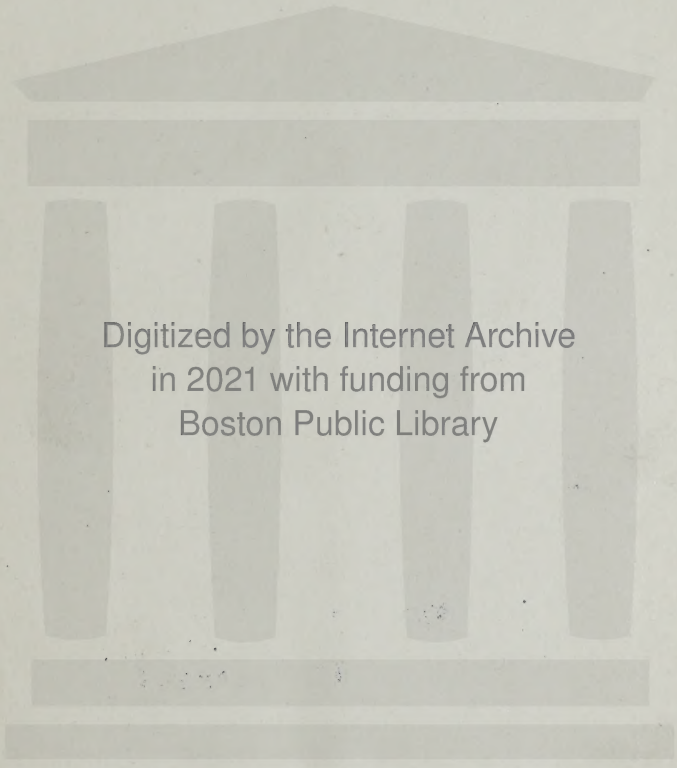

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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

OF

HUMAN RIGHTS AND OF SLAVERY,

IN

4265.26

TWO ARTICLES,

FROM THE

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW

FOR

MARCH, MDCCCXLIX.

COLUMBIA, S. C.
PRINTED BY I. C. MORGAN.
1849.

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July 8, 1899.

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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND OF SLAVERY.

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1. *Correspondence between the Cherokee and Choctaw Missions, the Rev.* S. B. TREAT, *and the Prudential Committee of the A. B. C. F. M. Missionary Herald for October,* 1848.
2. *The Negro Law of South Carolina, collected and digested by* JOHN BELTON O'NEALL, *one of the Judges of the Courts of Law and Errors of the said State, under a Resolution of the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina. Columbia: Printed by John G. Bowman,* 1848.
3. *Considerations upon the nature and tendency of Free Institutions, by* FREDERICK GRIMKE, *Cincinnati. H. W. Derby & Co., publishers. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co.* 1848. 8*vo.* 544 *pages.*

"The powers that be are ordained of God." Here is the Christian doctrine of the origin of government. Civil polity is not a device of man, but the institution of God. Nor is it the result of a compact between the individuals of a multitude, each of whom was previously the sole master of himself; it is rather the offspring of the nature and providential circumstances which God has assigned to man. It is pure fiction to assert that the state of nature ever was a state of individual independence. Mankind from the beginning never have existed otherwise than in society and under government. The principle of subjection to government is not that principle of common honesty which binds a man to his own engagements, nor yet that principle of political honesty which binds the child to his ancestors' engagements; for of all the rightful subjects of government that do now exist, or ever did exist, not one in a million ever yielded his consent, or was ever asked for his consent to any such compact. The principle of subjection to govern-

ment is a conscientious submission to the will of God. The Creator originally destined man for society and civilization. These, and not barbarism and personal savage independence, are his natural state.* And consequently, all those rights and all those various subordinations of personal condition, which are necessary to the perfection of society and to the full development of humanity, are strictly and perfectly natural. That is as truly natural to which nature in its progress invariably conducts us, as that which is actually born with us. The acquired perceptions of right are no less natural than those which are original.

If, therefore, the "state of nature," commonly so called, be a mere dream of the imagination, what are we to say of "natural rights," as founded upon that fictitious basement?

We say that, as to an absolute equality among men, it neither has existed nor does exist as a fact; nor yet is it any where demanded by the Scriptures.

* The opinion that in the earliest periods of time mankind in every part of the globe were in a state of absolute savagism, forms the basis of Lord Kaimes's well known work called "Sketches of the history of man." The late Dr. Doeg of Sterling, replied to Lord Kaimes, in "Two letters on the savage state," illustrating all his positions by a great number of particulars from ancient and modern history. Among other propositions, Dr. Doeg established the following:

"The more populous kingdoms were civilized at a period prior to the records of history, and the presumption therefore is, that they were civilized from the beginning."

"No people once civilized, and then again reduced to barbarism, have ever recovered without foreign aid."

"No savage nation has ever been known to move one step towards civilization, till impelled by some external cause."

"There appears in savages a natural and rooted aversion to a civilized state."

"There seems to be in human nature an innate propensity towards degeneracy, even in a state of the highest improvement."

And in concluding he challenged Lord Kaimes to point to *one* state, nation, or society, once confessedly savage, which ever did, solely by the gradual exertion of its own internal powers, after passing successively through the steps and states specified in Lord K's. sketches, at length arrive at civilization.

Shortly after the publication of these "Letters," Lord Kaimes invited the Doctor to visit him, when, after much discussion, his Lordship candidly and fully acknowledged himself in error and his opponent right.

Dr. Doeg traced the "idea of a state of universal savagism to the chimerical cosmogonies of Mochus, Democritus and Epicurus." We see only one difference between this idea and that of the author of the "Vestiges,"—one goes a little further back than the other. Lord Kaimes developes civilized man out of a *savage*,—the other writer out of an *oyster!* But Christian minds that shrink with horror from the one theory are quite familiar with the other, all contrary as it is to Bible history.

The Poet well says:

"Tell the truth, yea, tell it out,
Nature! without fear or doubt.
Tell it out that never yet
Have two utter equals met.
Leaves and fruits on every tree,
Fowls and fish of air and sea,
Stars on high with all their host,
Pebbles from a Kingdom's coast,
Search them all, some difference still
Clings to each for good or ill;
Search the world—all worlds around,
Perfect twins were never found;
Babes of various realm and race,
Men of every age and place;
Gifts of God, or wise denials,
Pleasures, sorrows, triumphs, trials:
All things differ every where,—
Never two could start quite fair—
Never two could keep the start,
In soul or body, mind or heart;
While the shortest winter's day,
To its morrow gloom'd away."

And, *as to the Bible*, it gives no countenance to the common radical notions on this subject. It teaches, indeed, that we are *all Brethren*. But Esau and Jacob were brethren, of whom before the children were born or had yet done good or evil, God said, "The elder shall serve the younger." The Bible presents God as the sovereign Arbiter of human affairs, dividing to the nations their inheritance—yes, and setting every individual member in the (great social) body just as it hath pleased him. (1 Cor. 12: 18.) The subjection, by God, of one man and one nation to another man and another nation, is supposed throughout the Bible as an ordinary and constantly recurring fact. The Christian fathers, too, for many centuries after Christ, are totally silent as to any opposition of Christianity to slavery. It was a common saying among them however, that slavery is not man's natural state, but a result of the fall—in other words, they viewed it as one of the allotments of Providence to man, as having sinned and so forfeited liberty and every other blessing with life itself.

In this day of wide spread agitation about rights of liberty, and of rising agitation too about rights of property, rent, land, &c., the Bible is our stronghold. In the tenth Commandment, graven with God's finger on marble, we find

a divine solemn recognition of *rights of property*: "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbors." Do you find yourself *without things*, that is, *poor?* See that you do not even *wish* in your heart to have your neighbor's things, however abundantly the sovereign but righteous Lord of all may have bestowed them upon him in contrast with yourself. The same divine Commandment sanctions also the *right of property in a human being*, and thus gives warrant to our rights of authority as slave holders. The Lawgiver says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." Does the almighty God then count slaves as human cattle? Is the slave a mere thing? Far from it! He is an immortal man, but has a human master by God's appointment, and that master has a right of property in him—has a right in his services which no other man can innocently covet. Nay, the slave himself must not covet or take what belongs not to himself. But on the contrary, it is said to him, "Art thou called being a slave, care not for it."* (1 Cor. 7: 21.)

The Scriptures then did not originate the idea that all men, simply from the fact of being *men*, have a natural right to an equal amount of property, or an equal share of personal liberty. There are rights unquestionably, which belong to man as such, and which can not be wrested from him without the destruction of his intellectual and moral constitution. Without them he could not be a *man*. But there are other rights which accrue in the progress of society, and which appertain not to man *as such*, but to man in particular providential circumstances and relations. These rights are as natural as others, because society and civiliza-

* On the other clause we quote, without any expression of opinion, a note from Babington's Hulsean Lecture on the *Influence of Christianity in promoting the abolition of Slavery in Europe*, *p.* 15.

"The doubt is what "but if thou mayest be free use *it* rather" (not expressed in the Greek) means; several very eminent commentators quoted in Pool's Synopsis, and also Usher and Neander say, 'liberty:' but Chrysostom, Jerome, Theodoret, Isidorus, Pelusiota, Œcumenius, Photius, and Theophylact, explain 'it' by 'slavery'; and this sense, it must be confessed, suits the context admirably; not to add that εἰ καὶ commonly signifies not 'if' but 'although.' See Cramer's *Catena in Epist. Paul.* 5: 1., *p.* 141, for some of these authorities.

tion, which develope them, are natural; but they cannot be separated from the circumstances and relations which determine them; and hence, men in other circumstances and other relations can lay no claim to them.

It is a mistake to suppose that because these rights are *natural*, therefore they belong to humanity, essentially considered, and must accordingly be conceded to every human being, because he is a man. The rights of a father are natural, but they belong only to fathers. Rights of property are natural, but they belong only to those who have property. There is a natural way of becoming a father, and there is a natural method of acquiring and indefinitely increasing property.

Where then do we place the foundation of all rights? In the nature which God has given to man. It is that which renders him capable of rights. A brute can neither have property nor dominion; for rights can no where exist, except among those who are susceptible of moral obligation.

Of course, therefore, all those rights which belong to men as such, should be conceded to the race. None should any where be deprived of them. But the rights which belong to particular conditions, those which result from the circumstances and relations in which men are placed, must obviously admit of as great a variety as those circumstances and relations themselves; and these rights are distributed under the providence of God, according to those laws (as natural as society itself,) in conformity with which men come to be found in these circumstances and relations. Some are rulers, some subjects; some are rich, some poor; some are fathers, some children; some are bond, some free. And if a man is justly and providentially a ruler, he has the rights of a ruler; if a husband, the rights of a husband; if a father, the rights of a father; and if a slave, only the rights of a slave. Hence the force and propriety of the legal maxim, *Partus sequitur ventrem* — that is, all men have an equal and perfect right to the *status* in which they are born, with all its established rights and privileges, and also to whatever else they can legally and meritoriously acquire. Our true and only titles to liberty and property are *inheritance*, or *honest and legal acquisition*, (both dependent upon the discriminations of Providence,) and not

any *abstract natural equality*, stepping in at every succeeding age, among the social and political inequalities necessarily produced even in one generation, and laying all level in confusion and destruction. We hold such an Equality to be—

> "A dull, debasing, sordid thing,
> Crushing down each generous spring;
> A stern Procrustes' iron bed,
> To rack the feet or lop the head."

It is nothing but—

> "Vanity and Sloth and Crime that stand,
> With low Ambition hand to hand,
> And scheme and plot a cunning plan,
> Utterly to ruin man;
> They seek to level love and hate,
> And grind to atoms all things great."

The only way of evading the statements now made, as far as slavery is concerned, is to deny that this condition is consistent with the appointments of Providence, or the will of God — in other words, to assert (as we both wonder and regret to see the Prudential Committee of the American Board asserting) that Slavery is "Anti-Christian and always and every where sinful." That cannot be Anti-Christian however, which Christ and the Apostles never condemned. And slavery must just be left to stand upon the same footing with any other inequality of condition, until some higher revelation than the Bible's shall shew that the relation itself is inconsistent with the moral nature of man, and deprives him of his ethick character; — in other words, that man cannot be a slave, and yet fear God and work righteousness.

That these were the principles of the English and American Revolutions, is obvious from the fact that the patriotic actors in those great events professed to contend for nothing but a lawful inheritance; — rights which had long before been connected with the circumstances and relations in which they were providentially placed. "Your subjects have *inherited* this freedom," * was the language of the

* Macauley, in his recently published History remarks, vol 1, p. 23, "The change, great as it is, which the policy of England has undergone

petition of right (drawn by Selden and other profoundly learned men,) and addressed by Parliament to Charles I. To that Parliament which resisted Charles' encroachments on their inherited rights are due the thanks of their American as much as of their English posterity. We repudiate the popular idea that our Revolution freed us from British slavery. We were no Slaves. Our fathers contended for their lawful franchises, not on abstract principles as the *rights of men*, but on legal principles as the *rights of Englishmen*, and as a patrimony derived from their forefathers.

But we are only laying down general principles. We do not forget that every case of Revolution is to be decided on its own merits. "Times and occasions teach their own lessons." "Circumstances (which with some pass for nothing,) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color and its discriminating effect." We have undertaken to set forth the general bearing of Christianity on human rights. We understand the general doctrine of the Scriptures to be, that a nation, and that individuals,

during the last six centuries, has been the effect of gradual development, not of demolition and reconstruction. The present Constitution of our country is, to the Constitution under which she flourished five hundred years ago, what the tree is to the sapling, what the man is to the boy. The alteration has been great. Yet there never was a moment, at which, the chief part of what existed was not old. * * * * . Other Societies possess written constitutions more symmetrical; but no other society has yet succeeded in uniting revolution with prescription, progress with stability, the energy of youth with the majesty of immemorial antiquity. * * * * . There is no country where statesmen have beenso much under the influence of the past. * * * * . History is (by us) regarded as a *repository of title-deeds*, on which the rights of governments and nations depend. * * * * . Our laws and customs have never been lost in general and irreparable ruin. With us, the precedents of the middle ages are still valid precedents, and are still cited on the gravest occasions by the most eminent statesmen. Thus, when King George III. was attacked by the malady which made him incapable of performing his regal functions, and when the most distinguished lawyers and politicians differed widely as to the course which ought to be pursued, the houses of Parliament would not proceed to discuss any plan of regency, till all the examples which were to be found in our annals, from the earliest times, had been collected and arranged. Committees were appointed to examine the ancient records of the realm. The first precedent reported was that of the year 1217: much importance was attached to the precedents of 1326, of 1377, and of 1422; but the case which was justly considered as most in point was that of 1455. Thus, in our country, the dearest interests of parties have frequently been staked on the results of the researches of antiquaries.

who enjoy political freedom, have the same, and no other right to it which the rich man's son has to the property he was born to; and that other nations or individuals, born under despotic governments, are bound to submit to the inequalities of their position, just as the poor man's child who inherits nothing; unless like many a poor man's son he can legally and meritoriously acquire what he has not inherited. If a Monarch is born to the arbitrary sway of millions, or a slaveholder to the rule of hundreds, the Bible teaches respecting both, that Cesar has his "things" which must be rendered to him. If the subjects of either Cesar refuse him his "things", they sin. If they seek to wrest away his rights that they may increase their own, they commit the same fault, as if the many poor should rise and forcibly take away the possessions of the few rich. Nations and individuals have no scriptural right to get either freedom or property in this way. They are in God's hands, who has put upon them this burden, and they must be content to remain in God's hands, doing their duty in the place he has appointed them.

Do we then maintain the doctrine of *passive obedience?* We reject this error of the old exploded fanatics of slavery with as much abhorrence as we do that of our new fanatics, of equal universal freedom.* Magistrates and Kings, and Masters too, are to be obeyed as such, and not otherwise. The veriest Despot on earth is obeyed as one that has arbitrary, yet not unlimited power. If the Shah of Persia were to prove himself a human tiger, immolating his subjects, just to please his infernal cruelty, we say that, even under that despotism, Christianity would authorize the nation, not *any individual*, but *the nation collectively*, to put him off his throne.† "Tyranny from policy may justi-

* "The speculative line of demarcation where obedience ought to end and resistance must begin is indeed faint, obscure, and not easily definable. It is not a single act or a single event which determines it. Governments must be abused and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of, and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past. When things are in that lamentable condition, the nature of the disease is to indicate the remedy, to those whom nature has qualified to administer in extremities this critical, ambiguous, bitter potion to a distempered State," and "a Revolution will always be the very last resource of the thinking and the good." But even here the general principle is very plain.

† But in this connexion it is worth our while to observe the method by which God delivered his chosen people from the land of Egypt. Though

fy rebellion from principle." God made the Shah of Persia a Despot, but he gave him no authority to kill after that fashion. That is not one of "Cesar's things."

So, much more under a constitutional government, the people have a right, nay, are bound to defend what Providence has given them, — what they have *inherited*, whether of liberty or of property. The Commons of England had a right to resist the encroachments of Charles I. The English nation, in 1688, had a right to resist the second James. And our fathers of the Revolution had a right to contend for their old inheritance, as Britons, of the right of being represented where they were to be taxed.

Thus, according to our views of the Christian doctrine on this subject, the duties and the rights of nations both differ according to their circumstances. Of some, the duty is obedience and submission to authority even the most arbitrary; while others may have to guard watchfully, and faithfully defend their inheritance of freedom. Their duties differ, because their providential position differs. They may be servants of their despot, and then they must obey. They may be masters of their public servants, and then they must see that these do faithfully perform their various offices and functions.

We would not deny that there has been in the affairs of men, under providential guidance, a progress of liberty. And this progress of liberty it may be the will of the Almighty Ruler to extend, until free institutions become universal. Nor yet do we deny that, in the providence of God, liberty has often changed hands. Nor would we question that the most wicked and bloody revolutions may be by God over-ruled, for the final general good. We believe all events are so over-ruled. Still, such a merciful divine interposition does not exculpate the guilty movers of rebellion.*

in bondage to Idolaters, who oppressed them in the most cruel manner, they strike not one blow for themselves, nor take one step in flight, till the authority which God had put them under was made willing to say, "Get ye out." So too, at a later day, when captives in Babylon, they were directed "seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried captives, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace." Jer. xxix: 7. Waiting through the whole period of 70 years, they are peacefully led back to their own land, as God disposes the heart of Cyrus to favour their return.

* See all these sentiments fully sustained in Calvin's Institutes, Book IV., chapter xx, Sections xxix, xxx and xxxi.

We hold to the general principle before stated, that every soul must be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God.

It may be said that we have written to no purpose, seeing that we have only set forth very general principles. But we think the principles we have set forth are neither more nor less general than the Bible's. We have developed, as we think, the Scriptural doctrine of human rights. The world is governed by ideas. "Theories industrial, social and political — abstract opinions, Utopian dreams are upheaving the old world." The new is also agitated by a theory — the theory of free soil and free slaves — yes, and "questions in obscurer channels, about rent and property, and the right to labor, and to the land, are spreading themselves through the land." Thousands are proclaiming that there is no right of property in human beings, and *hundreds have begun to shout* that there is no right of rent, and that no man has a right to any more land than he can cultivate. Against all these general principles we set ours, — nay, not *ours*, but those of God's inspired word.

It is indeed a very practical, and not at all a mere abstract question; what is the influence of Christianity upon Slavery? — upon the *Slave*, upon the *Master*, and upon the *permanency of the relation.*

It has been said by a Boston divine that, "if the gospel were as evangelically preached at the South as it is at the North," (say in New England ! !) "Slavery would soon come to an end." The Prudential Committee of the American Board, also, in their letter to the Choctaw Missionaries, say, that if our Saviour's golden rule "were carried out to its legitimate results, Slavery in all its essential features would cease at once."

But what is Slavery? There is no end to this discussion, because different parties use Slavery to mean very different things. Dr. Whewell's definition prevails, we suppose, very generally in New England. "Slavery converts a person into a thing, an object merely passive, without any of the recognized attributes of human nature."

This was Aristotle's idea when he advised Alexander to deal with the Barbarians as with brutes or plants. This was the spirit, and letter too, of the Roman law, which held slaves, "*pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus.*" But

these are not our modern, our Southern ideas of Slavery. And old school Presbyterians at the North have given another, and what we take as the true definition of the term, "All the ideas (says the Biblical Repertory) which necessarily enter into the definition of Slavery are, deprivation of personal liberty, obligation of service at the discretion of another, and the transferable character of the authority and claim of the master." It may be that some bad, very bad laws have been passed to regulate Slavery. There may be some unchristian abuses of the master's power — some sinful accessories attaching to the institution — but the essence of slavery is the master's right to use and control and dispose of the services of his slave.

Now Christianity *unquestionably sanctions Slavery*, as thus defined. This is one manifest bearing of Christianity upon the institution. We do not say that Christianity sanctions Slavery as Aristotle sanctioned it, when he said that the Greeks might rightfully go and by war reduce the Barbarians into bondage. But we think we are often so misunderstood at the North. Our statement that the Bible sanctions Slavery arouses much needless indignation, because the North will not distinguish between the right to govern our Slaves, as being providentially placed under our control, and the right of going and enslaving men free-born.

And here we will refer to another expression of opinion at the South, which very likely is often misunderstood. Southern politicians say, "Slavery is a positive blessing." In the fear of God we, and perhaps all other Southern Christians say the same thing, *absolutely*, as respects the negro. As respects the whole community of whites and blacks, whom an unscrutable but wise Providence has joined here together, we also say the same thing, *as comparing Slavery with Emancipation.* But as comparing the present advantages of our white population with what they might have been, had not the negro been introduced, the Christian people of the South have never yet said that Slavery is a positive blessing, and we know not that they will ever be driven by all the fierceness of the attacks upon them to say so. Why should they say so, or why should they say the contrary? Why waste time in vain speculations about unsupposable cases, when we have so much practical duty not yet overtaken?

We repeat, Christianity sanctions the relation of Master and Slave. The Bible is the best book for those who are low down as well as for those who are high up in the scale of life. It suits people living under a despotic government, quite as well as its suits those who live under a free government. It is as safe a book for the subjects of the one as for the sons of the other.

But Christianity also civilizes the Slave. It is as good for Slaves, however fierce and ungovernable naturally, as it is for the Convicts of the Penitentiary, or the Lunatics of the Asylum. Not that it renders force always unnecessary. We must keep a rod for the backs of wayward children and slaves, if not for those of soldiers and seamen. But men are no where on earth governed mainly by force. Moral means are mightiest, and of all moral means Christianity is the purest and the strongest. The British government once dreaded, but now fosters the influence of the Missionaries, even the American Missionaries, in India.

In a word, Christianity improves the Slave in all parts of his character. It takes away piece-meal this mass of barbarian ignorance, superstition and corruption. It is advantageous to their whole physical, intellectual and moral nature. It makes the Slaves better, more intelligent, industrious, tractable, trusty, — better men, better servants of God, better servants of man. "The Slave," says Neander, in reference to the first three centuries, (Vol. 1, p. 71, Rose's translation,) "remained in all his worldly circumstances a Slave, and fulfilled his duties in that station with greater fidelity and conscientiousness than before." The same is true of our negroes. Christianity has improved them, both as men and as slaves. Compare them with their forefathers! By how many degrees the barbarian has already been elevated in all parts of his nature!

And what is the effect of Christianity upon the Master?

It softens his spirit. It takes away the sternness of law and discipline, while it confirms and establishes their just bonds. Whatever was formerly harsh in the relation is gradually removed. Mutual intercourse is sweetened by it—the master is no tyrant, the slave no rebel. "Authority ceases to be severe; obedience ceases to be a task." The essence of Slavery, viz, the master's right to use and dispose of his servant's time and labor, is untouched by Christianity, ex-

cept to establish it on a moral and religious foundation, and yet the master learns to feel that he and his slave are children of the same God and Father, and while he cannot admit him to the social privileges of a Brother, he recognizes in him a valued and esteemed, though humble dependent. And this effect of Christianity on the master grows with the growth and advance of the legitimate influence of Christianity on the slave. Good slaves make good masters, as well as good masters good slaves.

And then there is an influence of Christianity in removing the abuses which may attach to the exercise of arbitrary power.

It was so under the Roman empire. Under Augustus, Adrian and Antoninus, putting Slaves to death was no murder, but the first Christian emperor laid down that "if any one, after the brutal manner of the barbarians, caused his Slave to expire under the torture, he should be guilty of homicide."

So also he made a law (A. D. 398) forbidding the forcible separation of servile families, whether by sale or partition of property. "For who can endure (said he) that children and parents, wives and husbands, should be separated from each other?"

Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the 3rd century, says, "We must do by our Slaves as we would do by ourselves, for they are men as we are; for God, if you consider, is the God of the freeman and of the slave alike."

And so Christianity makes us feel now. We recognize our Slaves as not being things, but men. When we buy and sell them, it is not *human flesh and blood* we buy and sell, but we buy or sell a *right*, established by Providence, and sanctioned by Scripture, to *their labor and service for life.* We still bear in mind that they are *men*, and have immortal souls; — that Christ shed his blood to redeem them as well as ourselves, and that we are put in charge of their training, as of that of our own children, for his kingdom and glory.

It is, then, as plain as daylight, that Christianity condemns all laws of the State, and all ideas and practices of individuals which put aside the immortality of the Slave and regard him in any other light than that of a moral and responsible fellow-creature of our own. We have no hesita-

tion in declaring that we accord with Judge O'Neall, in earnestly desiring the repeal, for example, of the law against teaching the Slave to read. Not that we suppose it possible for the laboring class in any country to make much actual use of reading — nor that we forget how the Apostles converted a world by oral teaching chiefly; but because we conceive the law referred to is both useless and hurtful. It is a *useless* law, for very many of our best citizens continually break it, or allow it to be broken in their families. Besides, very many of our Slaves can read, and do teach and will teach others. No dangerous negro can be hindered from getting knowledge by such a law. "It sharpens our appetite," said an old negro in Savannah to an English traveller and writer. But the law is *hurtful*, inasmuch as it throws an obstacle in the way of that which it is plainly the wisdom of the State to foster and encourage, viz., the religious instruction of the young negro population.

The question of the effect of Christianity upon the permanency of Slavery in this country, is one certainly of the profoundest interest. What light does the past history of Christianity shed upon it?

Adam Smith, Hallam, and Macauley also, in his recent History of England, all speak of the Abolition of Slavery in Europe as having been very silently and imperceptibly effected, neither by legislative regulation nor physical force. What share Christianity had in effecting this abolition, has been much disputed. Guizot, Muratori, Millar, Sismondi, and the Pictorial Historian of England, allow her very little influence. On the other hand, Robinson, the historian of Charles V, Biot, an elaborate French author, who got a gold medal from the French Academy of Mor. and Pol. Science, for his work "*De l'Abolition de l'esclavage ancien en occident*," and the Rev. Churchill Babington, of St. John's College, Cambridge, who got the Hulsean prize for the year 1845, for an essay on the same subject, all these, and others, ascribe the greatest influence to Christianity, as the only influence which has lasted long enough, or been universal enough, or unmixed and constant enough to accomplish such a task.

But it is curious indeed, as a question of Historical philosophy, to see how exceedingly *gradual* was the process by which Christianity operated in the abolition of Slavery.

Not only Guizot, on the one side, declares (Guiz. Civilis. en Europe, Sec. vi., p. 14,) that "Slavery subsisted a long time in the bosom of Christian society, without any great horror or irritation being expressed against it," but *Biot*, on the other side, tells us that "no Christian writers of the first three centuries speak of the abolition of Slavery as a consequence of Christianity. — Biot, p. 26.

And Babington, after quoting many passages from Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, and other early fathers remarks, "Not one of these writers even hints that slavery is improper or unlawful." Page 29.

This same writer also refers to the fact that Christianity has for eighteen centuries been operating upon European servitude. Page 117.

He also remarks "Christianity has been constantly producing such an effect upon society that when a *thousand years* had passed away, strict personal slavery had, in most parts of Europe, begun to disappear." Page 180.

What then is that influence, which, in our day, is so clamorous for the abolition of slavery?

It is, certainly, not Christianity; for Christianity, both in the days of the Apostles, and for centuries afterwards, did never so lift her voice. Christianity operated and operates in a much profounder, far gentler, and more wholesome manner.

What then is it? It is partly *humanity* excited by exaggerated, and in a great degree, false statements — it is partly *political self-interest and jugglery* — and it is partly the *democratic* principle. It is the radical doctrine of "equal rights," — it is the idea that the slave is unjustly deprived or debarred his natural rights — that he is entitled to liberty and prepared for it.

Let Christians at the North take their stand then, if they will, but let them do it distinctly, fairly, and openly, as apostles of civil liberty. Let them preach up a crusade for natural rights; but let them not tell us that their Master came to do such a work, or that the Gospel, evangelically preached, would soon put an end to Slavery. Let not Mr. Treat, or any one else, tell us that the law of love, if applied between slave holders and their slaves, would immediately rupture the bonds of society amongst us. Unchristian

abuses that law has reformed and is reforming, and (when the public mind at the South shall be no longer stung to madness by insults and reproaches,) will still reform. But the essence of slavery, the master's right to his slave's labor, is no more assaulted by Christianity than are the property rights of rich men at the North. The true interpretation of the golden rule on the subject of Slavery is to be found in the Apostolic instructions to masters. If there be any better way of applying the law of love to the system of slavery than these rules set forth, why did not the apostles, who said so much to masters, shew it to us, instead of leaving it to be found out by the men of this age?

Are we then asked whether we believe Slavery among us will be perpetual?

We say, as far as Christianity is concerned we do not see why it might not be perpetual, and yet we do not see reason to say that it will be so. It is a question for speculation, or rather it is *not* a question for speculation, for how can we judge before-hand what God intends to do? It is then more properly a question of Providence. It is in God's hands, and there we wish it to be.

We cannot reason that Christianity will operate now as it did of old upon Slavery, because new elements have come in.

There is the new element of democracy on the one hand, which may not allow Christianity to work in its own healthful and peaceful way — which sneers at such declarations as Bishop Butler made when he said, "Men are impatient and for precipitating things, but the Author of nature, (and the Bible,) appears deliberate throughout his operations," — and which would serve the most complicated questions and the most tangled relations, as Alexander did the Gordian Knot.

On the other hand there is the new element of a *difference of race.* Of old there was no similar obstacle to emancipation. Will Christianity ever allow us to manumit here our three millions of Africans — our three millions increased to five or ten millions? Will Christianity, that unquestionably makes masters benevolent, ever satisfy us that it is possible for two such dissimilar races to dwell together on equal terms.

Or will Christianity and the Providence of God ever point out a way for their removal to their own or some other country?

We count it almost profane to hazard one speculation about such hidden things of God.

One thing, fellow citizens of the South, is plain! It is ours to do the duties of intelligent, decided, fearless, conscientious Christian Masters, and future events we may leave with Him, who will direct them well.

And let our Northern Christian brethren join us in leaving Divine Providence to work out his own plans. We say to them respectfully and kindly, cease your attempts to rouse our consciences about the sinfulness of Slavery. Dismiss your anxieties about the civil liberty of the Slave. He does not need that — it would be no blessing to him. He needs another and a better freedom. That is the great point. Exhort us, reprove us, rebuke us, help us, pray for us in reference to this point! You have begun at the wrong end. You would abolish that which must be, and ought to be, fortified and confirmed. The Master's authority must not be withdrawn. Our system of Slavery is a civilizer and a christianizer. We must leave it for God to remove, when his time comes; meanwhile, we must maintain it, always administering it according to the law of love as explained by the Apostles.

The American Board has long stood fast and firm on the high Scriptural ground respecting Slavery. At their meeting in Brooklyn, some years ago, all the tremendous pressure that was brought by Abolitionists to bear upon them could not drive them from maintaining that slave-holding cannot scripturally be made a test of Church communion. And it would indeed seem hard, that they who have nothing directly to do with Slavery in these States, should, because unwilling to take the position of a lever to act on us, be made to share with us the burden of popular odium at the North. But, very remarkably indeed, the Providence of God has actually thrown upon that body an immediate responsibility in this matter. In two of their missions among the Indians of this country, slavery exists. Their church members hold slaves; their Missionaries hire them, which is, in principle of course, the same as owning them. The

Abolitionists are now urging a new issue on the Board. If slave-holding Indians can not be excluded from Missionary churches, at least the Missionary must be prohibited from hiring slave labor, however necessary to the comfort of his family, and however impossible it may be to obtain any other kind of domestic assistance. We shall await with interest the next meeting of the Board, to see how they will dispose of this question.

But the Prudential Committee, in their correspondence through their Secretary, Mr. Treat, with the Cherokee and Choctaw Missions, have already submitted to the Missions the alternative of giving up either slave labor, or their schools. We would make one single observation on this point. If those Indian Missionaries are morally bound thus to abjure Slavery as "a system always and every where sinful," why are not all we, who live in the American Slave States, morally bound to do the same thing? But, does the Prudential Committee mean to declare that, in their judgment, all Christian ministers and Christian people at the South should at once relinquish slave labor as sinful? In other words, (since the example of all the Christian people would be of course omnipotent,) would they wish to see the South plunged into all the horrors of Emancipation?

The Committee are much changed from what they were, if they would take this ground. But if the system must necessarily be maintained, then who has any right to blame good men for aiding to maintain it?

But the Committee do, in Mr. Treat's letter, cast censure upon all such good men. That letter holds their slaveholding to be "*prima facie* evidence of guilt." Here is a man, (says Mr. Treat,) involved in a system unchristian and sinful, and yet, (dreadful presumption indeed,) "he requests admission to the table of our blessed Lord." Yes! and Mr. Treat does not hesitate to say, that the Christian Missionary or Minister must stop the Slaveholder as he approaches the communion table, and require him to "prove," (what the Apostles have left no trace of their requiring the slaveholding candidate in their day to prove,) viz: "his freedom from the guilt of the system, before he can make good his claim to a place among the followers of Christ." "Such an enquiry, (says Mr. Treat,) is in

all cases fundamental." We only reply — Shew us your proofs.

As to the paragraph which follows this statement of the principles, upon which alone any Slaveholder can, according to this letter, be, in any case, admitted to church fellowship, we have only to say in concluding this article, that *it cuts off all the Southern Churches.* Not one benevolent Christian Master in a thousand at the South could shew that he is "an involuntary Slaveholder;" that he "retains the relation at the request of his Slaves, and for their advantage;" or that he "utterly rejects and repudiates the idea of holding property in his fellow-men." And if the American Board should take the ground of Mr. Treat, that there is "no warrant whatever for receiving any but such Slaveholders to the privileges of the people of God," then we cannot see but they will have yielded every thing to the Abolitionists, and that we must be cut off, (as we shall then be well content to be cut off,) from their fellowship.

UNIVERSITY SERMONS.

Sermons delivered in the Chapel of Brown University, by Francis Wayland, *President of the University. Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 59 Washington street,* 1849.

This is a selection from the discourses delivered by Dr. Wayland to his pupils. Our attention has been especially drawn to three Sermons "on the duty of obedience to the Civil Magistrates," and two others "on the recent Revolutions in Europe." The text on which *the former* are based is Matt. xxii: 21, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

In his first discourse, Dr. Wayland remarks that the people were at this time living under an absolute monarchy, and that the reigning Sovereign was a tyrant of atrocious wickedness. And yet our Lord directs that the government be respected and

the tribute paid. But this is only a part of the precept and the remainder is at least equally important. "Render unto God the things that are God's." Should therefore Cæsar claim the things of God they must by no means be rendered to Cæsar. Here then, the disciple of Christ seems to be furnished with two apparently opposite rules of conduct. The one is *obey*, and the other *obey not*, the Civil Magistrate. The solution of the difficulty is as follows:—Governments have only limited authority, conferred for definite and specified objects, and these objects to be accomplished by innocent means. Within these limits we must obey; beyond them, we may, and perhaps must disobey.

What then are the legitimate objects of civil government? The great object is to protect every man in the enjoyment of the rights conferred on him by his Creator. These rights are defined to be the right to use his body and his mind as he pleases, provided he do not interfere with the rights of his neighbor. Society is formed, therefore, for the protection of individuals. Government may use force in giving this protection, both at home and abroad. War is therefore justifiable in certain cases.

The second discourse treats of the duty of a citizen to scrutinize the acts of his government. We are all responsible for our associated as well as our personal actions. We may disobey if government require us to do wrong. This is illustrated at length by reference to the case of an unjust war; the author doubtless having the late American war with Mexico in his mind.

In the third discourse, the author still further illustrates the position that societies may do wrong as well as individuals; and that the members of such an erring community are individually responsible. The manner in which a Christian citizen may innocently deliver himself from the guilt of wrong perpetrated by the government of his country is there set forth at length, under the following items:—He must make himself acquainted with the constitution under which he lives, and with the just and right relations of his country with other nations. He must express his views. He must carry out his principles at the ballot box.

These three discourses do not in our view at all answer to the high reputation of their author for ability and eloquence. They are characterised neither by profoundness, accuracy, nor force. As an exhibition of the rights and duties of free-born American citizens, they may be considered passable, but the author no where sets any such limit to his investigations. He professes to treat of the duty of obedience to the civil magistrate. *Civil government*, not the *American government*, is his theme. Yet he never discriminates. And the young men of Brown University

we suppose, were left by these three discourses of their honored President, without the remotest conception that our rights and duties as citizens of this Republic differ in any manner or degree from the rights and duties of all other men on the face of the globe.

Dr. Wayland has not only studied moral and political science, but he has also written and published largely on the subject. We therefore deem altogether unpardonable the want of discrimination he exhibits in these sermons. What, for example, can be more loose than his statement on p. 259?—"Every man is conscious that he is an independent moral agent, responsible to God for the use of the powers with which he is endowed, and at liberty, so far as man is concerned, to use them as he will, provided he do not interfere with the correspondent rights of his neighbor. The muscles, the sinews, the senses, the whole body of a man, are his own, and provided he use them without injury to another, he may use them as he will." Supposing this absolutely true of American citizens, it certainly is not true of many other classes of our fellow men. Some of the rights of men are doubtless inalienable, but others are creatures of society, creatures of law. All mankind have an inalienable right to obey God rather than man. This right can be invaded innocently by none—it can be surrendered innocently by none. If all mankind have a right to obey God, they have also a right to learn God's will, and so far it is true, as Dr. W. says, that "every man's mind is his own." But even rights of conscience are not without some limits. Not only is it true, as our author himself says, that our freedom of conscience must "not infringe upon the rights of others," but there are unquestionably many situations in life which subject the conscience of one human being to the sense of duty of another. The minor, the soldier, the sailor, and the slave, are all, to a certain extent, under the guidance of the conscience of others. But as to a man's free use of his intellect, body and time, these never can be considered as inalienable rights. They may be innocently alienated by the man himself. They may be legally and justly taken from him, in certain cases. They are in certain cases witheld from him by the unerring Providence of God. Man may be *Man* without any of these rights, and they are therefore not inalienable from man.

But why should Dr. W. confine the natural rights of man to the free use of his mind and body? What would man do if he had nothing but mind and body? He needs a foothold on the earth; he must have food to eat and clothes to wear. And God has given the earth to the children of men. If, then, Dr. W.

may appeal to "every man's consciousness" to say whether he is not at liberty, so far as man is concerned, to use his muscles, sinews and senses as he will, why may not the Socialist appeal to every man's consciousness to say whether he is not entitled to his fair share of the earth and its fulness? Writers who sneer at prescription and prerogative in the dispute about political or personal freedom, may live to see the day when they shall have to answer their own arguments. Already have we in some parts of America, tenants, whose "consciousness" tells them that another man has no right to possess his thousands of acres, while they are destitute of a homestead.

In Dr. W's. well known work on Moral Science, (pp. 192–3,) he very properly declares that "men stand to each other in the relation of *equality*—not *equality of condition*, but *equality of right.*" This is just what Burke said, "Equal rights but not to equal things." Dr. W. explains: "God has placed men in just such circumstances as it hath pleased him. He gives wealth, intellect, physical strength, health, to all in different degrees. But each separate individual is created with precisely the *same right* to use the advantages with which God has endowed him, as every other individual." These are precisely our own views, and we apply them to the subject of American slavery, thus: It has pleased God to put masters and slaves among us into their relative positions; and the advantages and disadvantages of their respective positions belong by equal rights to both classes, and both classes have equal obligations to perform their relative duties, which are all set forth in the Bible.

Upon *the recent Revolutions in Europe*, we think it becomes every thoughtful man to speak with great caution. Dr. W. himself observes, that "no one can possibly foresee the direction in which nations thus excited will move, unless he can lay claim to a knowledge of their intellectual and moral character, such as cannot be possessed by a created understanding." Yet our author shrinks not from the expression of his "opinions respecting the tendency of these remarkable social changes." "All that we can do," says he, (we think it would be doing much,) "is to indicate the condition by which the future must be governed."

From the bottom of our hearts do we wish that all the good which Dr. Wayland anticipates, may flow from these astounding revolutions. The advancement of the cause of universal peace, of freedom of opinions, (or soul-liberty, as Roger Williams called it,) and of the developement of the human intellect, are results that every lover of mankind must rejoice to contemplate. But

as to "the prestige of the throne and the dynasty" being "gone forever," neither our opinions nor our desires agree with those of our author. We are of those who believe thrones and dynasties to be of the most sacred value and importance in certain stages of society. And we are disposed to think what Dr. W. seems to feel unable with any confidence to deny, that the people of Europe are not generally prepared for any other Government than that of the throne and dynasty. And sure we are, that if not prepared for any thing else, they cannot long maintain any thing else. If they must have masters, they will find them.

"The permanent reign of irresponsible power in the civilized world," (says our author,) "is, I hope, to be numbered among the things that have passed away." "That institution (the throne) can never henceforth be an object of veneration, which can be subverted or overawed by a small assemblage of the workmen of a city, in the sight of the very army enrolled and maintained for the sole purpose of supporting it. Despotic Governments are from this time forth impracticable." And yet on almost the next page we are told that "our only hope for the extension of human freedom rests upon the cultivation of the moral character of the people." Without this, "the overthrow of existing governments can confer no advantage; nay, it may tend to sink the nations yet deeper in barbarism. Anarchy, despotism and revolution, will succeed to anarchy, despotism and revolution, until the children of men have learned that the Heavens do rule. And hence it may be demonstrated that free political institutions can never be permanently maintained in any nation, except it be imbued with the precepts of the Gospel of Christ."

That the European nations are imbued with the principles of the Gospel, Dr. Wayland of course does not believe. And we do not see how he can anticipate for them any thing but what he himself describes as a "succession of revolutions, and all the usual changes from freedom to anarchy, from anarchy to despotism, and from despotism to fitful and short-lived freedom." The prospects of European freedom, then, according to the showing of the author himself, are bad enough. And the hopes of good men for Europe must be now, just as before, altogether based on God and Christianity. Dr. Wayland concludes the last of his two discourses with this sentiment; but we think it should have pervaded them. It is not civil liberty in any form that constitutes the chief want of Europe; and it is not the principle of civil liberty that can regenerate her. Nor can civil liberty be established permanently there, without large effusions

of the Divine Spirit's influence. We have no confidence whatever that the prestige of the throne and dynasty, and the rule of the irresponsible power, are ended in Europe. We are just as little confident that they ought to end at present.

These two discourses on the recent revolutions present the same erroneous views of human rights which characterize those on obedience to the civil magistrate. Dr. W. says (p. 311,) that these revolutions have "disclosed the fact, that no divine ordinance hedges about the majesty of thrones, but that they are really and of right dependent for their existence on the will of the people." This is certainly going as much to the one extreme as ever Filmer did to the other. And how does it consist with Dr. W's. acknowledgements on pp. 255–7, that Christ commanded the people in his time to render obedience to the reigning sovereign, although a tyrant of atrocious wickedness?

On page 316, our author says, "The truth that every man is responsible for all his actions to God, presupposes the right to universal freedom." On page 305, the same sentiment is expressed. But slaves, for example, are responsible to God for obeying their masters; and however much you cause them to feel this responsibility, you make them none the less slaves.

On page 308, Dr. W. says, "Wherever the Bible is read, and man learns the nature of his responsibility to God, he learns at the same time his right to do as he pleases, provided he violates the rights of no other human being." But Dr. W. of course puts rights of masters as low as rights of kings, "which are not hedged about by any divine ordinances." And so Dr. W's. opinion is, that the Bible teaches slaves that their masters have no rights over them, and that they have "the right to do as they please." In fact, he says, (p. 306,) for "men to be restrained by their fellows from innocently seeking out their own happiness as they will, is an insult to our common nature, a tyranny to be resisted even unto death." On this point, we commend to the attention of President Wayland, (revered by us as the faithful and kind preceptor of early life,) the following truly philosophical observations from one of Mr. Calhoun's latest speeches."

"Man, for the purpose of reasoning, may be regarded in three different states: in a state of individuality; that is, living by himself, apart from the rest of his species. In the social; that is, living in society, associated with others of his species. And in the political; that is, living under government. We may reason as to what would be his rights and duties in either, without taking into consideration whether he could exist in it or not. It is certain, that in the first, the very supposition that he lived

apart and separated from all others, would make him free and equal. No one in such a state could have the right to command or control another. Every man would be his own master, and might do just as he pleased. But it is equally clear, that man cannot exist in such a state, that he is by nature social, and that society is necessary, not only to the proper developement of all his faculties, moral and intellectual, but to the very existence of his race. Such being the case, the state is a purely hypothetical one; and when we say all men are free and equal in it, we announce a mere hypothetical truism; that is, a truism resting on a mere supposition that cannot exist, and of course one of little or no practical value.

"But to call it a state of nature was a great misnomer, and has led to dangerous errors: for that cannot justly be called a state of nature, which is so opposed to the constitution of man, as to be inconsistent with the existence of his race, and the developement of the high faculties, mental and moral, with which he is endowed by his Creator.

"Nor is the social state of itself his natural state, for society can no more exist without government, in one form or another, than man without society. It is the political then, which includes the social, that is his natural state. It is the one for which his Creator formed him, into which he is impelled irresistably, and in which only his race can exist, and all his faculties be fully developed.

"Such being the case, it follows that any, the worst form of government, is better than anarchy; and that individual liberty, of freedom, must be subordinate to whatever power may be necessary to protect society against anarchy within or destruction without; for the safety and well-being of society are as paramount to individual liberty as the safety and well-being of the race is to that of individuals; and in the same proportion the power necessary for the safety of society is paramount to individual liberty. On the contrary, government has no right to control individual liberty beyond what is necessary to the safety and well-being of society. Such is the boundary which separates the power of government and the liberty of the citizen or subject in the political state, which, as I have shown, is the natural state of man—the only one in which his race can exist, and the one in which he is born, lives and dies.

"It follows from all this that the quantum of power on the part of the government, and of liberty on that of individuals, instead of being equal in all cases, must necessarily be very unequal among different people, according to their different condi-

tions. For just in proportion as a people are ignorant, stupid, debased, corrupt, exposed to violence within, and danger from without, the power necessary for government to possess in order to preserve society against anarchy and destruction, becomes greater and greater, and individual liberty less and less, until the lowest condition is reached, when absolute and despotic power becomes necessary on the part of the government, and individual liberty extinct. So, on the contrary, just as a people rise in the scale of intelligence, virtue and patriotism, and the more perfectly they become acquainted with the nature of government, the ends for which it was ordered, and how it ought to be administered, and the less the tendency to violence and disorder within, and danger from abroad; the power necessary for government becomes less and less, and individual liberty greater and greater. Instead, then, of all men having the same right to liberty and equality, as is claimed by those who hold that they are all born free and equal, liberty is the noble and highest reward bestowed on mental and moral developement, combined with favorable circumstances. Instead then of liberty and equality being born with man; instead of all men and all classes and descriptions being equally entitled to them, they are high prizes to be won, and are in their most perfect state, not only the highest reward that can be bestowed on our race, but the most difficult to be won, and when won the most difficult to be preserved.

"They have been made vastly more so, by the dangerous errors I have attempted to expose, that all men are born free and equal, as if those high qualities belonged to man without effort to acquire them and to all equally alike, regardless of their intellectual and moral condition. The attempt to carry into practice this, the most dangerous of all political error, and to bestow on all, without regard to their fitness, either to acquire or maintain liberty—that unbounded and individual liberty supposed to belong to man in the hypothetical and misnamed state of nature, has done more to retard the cause of liberty and civilization, and is doing more at present than all other causes combined. While it is powerful to pull down governments, it is still more powerful to prevent their construction on proper principles. It is the leading cause among those which have placed Europe in its present anarchical condition, and which mainly stands in the way of re-constructing good governments in the place of those which have been overthrown, threatening thereby the quarter of the globe most advanced in progress and civilization, with hopeles anarchy, to be followed by military despotism."